

THE  
DRAMATIC CENSOR;  
OR,  
Weekly Theatrical Report.

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NUMBER XXVI.

(Being the APPENDIX, or SUPPLEMENT.)

SATURDAY, JUNE 28, 1800.

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*Frui paratis, et valido mihi*

*Latœe dones, et, precor, integra*

*Cum mente: nec turpem senectam*

*Degere, nec citharâ carentem.*

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The *First* and *Second* Volumes of the DRAMATIC CENSOR being now completed, the Work may be had, either in separate Numbers, or in Sets, half-bound, price Seven Shillings each Volume, by applying to the Publishers, J. ROACH, Russel Court, Drury-Lane; and C. CHAPPLE, 66, Pall Mall.

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THEATRICAL RETROSPECT,

[Involving an Abstract of the Occurrences of the former part of the Season, prior to the commencement of the DRAMATIC CENSOR.]

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AS we are now on the eve of bidding farewell to our Readers for the present, as *Weekly* Reporters of the Stage, till the re-opening of the campaign at the Winter Theatres, we flatter ourselves

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that the most acceptable mode of taking leave, will be to render our work as perfect as existing circumstances will permit, by supplying the chasm necessarily occasioned in our publication, through its commencement in the *middle* of the season. In this view we shall enter into a brief recapitulation of past occurrences, previous to the date of the **DRAMATIC CENSOR**; without, however, launching into any greater length of disquisition, than is indispensably requisite to establish the character we wish our publication to possess, of a complete *Theatrical Record*.

The Season opened at Covent Garden Theatre, on the 16th of September; at Drury Lane, on the 17th of that month. As usual, at the commencement of a season, the performances took place at the two Theatres alternately for several weeks. In the article of *novelties*, Covent Garden decidedly distanced her rival; Drury Lane producing only *two* new pieces, and both of those *after-pieces*, in the course of the four months, which intervened between the opening of the Theatres, and the commencement of the **DRAMATIC CENSOR**; whilst Covent Garden, on the other hand, during the same period, brought forward *five*, and two of them regular five-act Dramas. This pre-eminence, in point of *novelty*, Covent Garden maintained till the final termination of the season.

In point of *time*, however, Drury Lane had the honour of starting *first*. *Embarkation*, a Musical Entertainment



tainment in two acts, by Mr. FRANKLIN, was produced on the 3d of October, but, like its merit, its success was very indifferent. Though bolstered up with the powerful aid of music, puppet-shew, and *political notoriety*, it was not able to stand its ground above *five* nights, when it experienced the common fate of such *mushroom* productions—"falling to rise no more."

The next *novelty* of the season was, *The Naval Pillar*, by T. DIBDIN, produced at Covent Garden, October 7. Like the *Embarkation*, its claims rest chiefly on its musical and scenic attractions; to which we may add the popularity of its subject, in allusion to the *Pillar* designed to be erected as a monument of national gratitude to our brave naval defenders. The dialogue is flimsy, and serves merely as a *vehicle* to the songs, which are popular, and subservient to our national prejudices; of course, well calculated to entrap the applause of *John Bull*. At the same time its pageantry rendered it a favourite with the *old dotards*, and *children*, of both sexes, who (with reverence be it spoken) generally constitute the major part of the audience. Though avowedly a *political squib*, as well as the *Embarkation*, it possessed this striking advantage over the latter, that its theme was *permanent*, and (thanks to the gallantry of our brave Tars!) constantly *prospective*, without any risque of *retrograde* operation; whereas the disastrous issue of the Dutch Expedition soon entailed odium and obloquy upon the measure, of which

the *Embarkation*, by *retrospect*, naturally came in for a share. Thus circumstanced, it is no wonder that the *Naval Pillar* should experience a more auspicious fate than its predecessor, having a run of at least eleven nights.

October 31.—Covent Garden brought forward another *novelty*, under the title of *Management*, by J. REYNOLDS. This is a regular Comedy, in five acts, and met with a very favourable reception, for which it perhaps stands more indebted to the frivolous and debauched taste of the town, than to its intrinsic deserts. Not that we mean to insinuate, that Mr. REYNOLDS possesses no Dramatic talents, no literary merit whatever; such an assertion would be vague, rash, and preposterous; but we certainly contend, that Mr. REYNOLDS writes principally with a view to immediate gain and temporary celebrity. He catches at *trifles*, and supplies the stage with *caricatures*, which are of more easy composition than *just delineations of life*.

With reference to the present Drama, we shall briefly observe, that it is sadly deficient in point of *unity* of plan; in point of due assimilation of the component parts. The *grave* and the *comic* scenes, do not mutually blend and correspond with each other. We admit that the author furnishes abundant food for mirth and laughter, especially in the characters of *Peter Mist*, M.P. and P.M.; the *Widow Dazzle*; *Captain Lavish*; and the *hen-pecked husband*, *Worry*. But then these characters, in themselves *outré*,  
and



and overcharged, are but too frequently lugged into situations, which bear no apparent connexion with the main thread of the story. Another objection we have to the Piece, attaches particularly to the character of *Mist*, and rests on the plea of *illiberality*. If common rumour on this head be entitled to credit, it is intended as a satire upon a certain Gentleman in an ostensible Theatrical situation. Such modes of ridicule we cannot but condemn; we are systematically adverse to *stage-libels*, unless in cases of deep and notorious delinquency. In the present instance, there is much room to suspect *invidious* and *malevolent* motives.

The Piece, upon the whole, had a tolerably good run, having been performed nearly thirty times, till Mr. MORTON'S Comedy of *Speed the Plough*, carried all before it; and, by its superior popularity, occasioned *Management* for the present to be laid upon the shelf.

*The Turnpike Gate*, a Comic Opera, in two Acts, is the next *novelty* upon the list. It was performed for the first time, at Covent Garden Theatre, on Thursday, the 14th of November, and is *ostensibly* the *maiden* production of Mr. KNIGHT. In making use of the term *ostensibly*, we do not mean to imply any doubt as to the identity of the author, for certainly, as a Dramatic performance, its character ranks very low; and we speak strictly within compass, when we add, that it is chiefly indebted for its success to the musical talents of Mr. REEVE, and

and the irresistible drollery of Mr. MUNN.—Mr. MAZZINGHI's co-operation in the musical department possesses little recommendation, except his *outlandish* name. Of the general character of this flimsy production, we have already delivered our opinion in the First Volume of the DRAMATIC CENSOR, page 203—206. Suffice it therefore to add, that its success was infinitely beyond its deserts, having been represented nearly thirty times. Such are the bewitching charms of sing-song.

November 16.—Drury Lane made an unsuccessful attempt with the *Pavillion*, a Musical Entertainment, in Two Acts, by Mr. LINLEY. It was damned, and not undeservedly, the very first night, and therefore is not entitled to further comment. A subsequent attempt was made to *force* it down the public throat, (see DRAMATIC CENSOR, Vol. I. page 121) on the strength of its reputed musical recommendations, under the altered title of the *Ring*; but, to the credit of the audience, the attempt totally miscarried, and the doom already awarded it by the public, received additional sanction by a second condemnation.

Covent Garden next came forward, November 30th, with *The Wise Man of the East*, a *soi-disant* Comedy, in Five Acts, adapted to the English Stage, from KOTZEBUE's Drama, entitled *The Writing Desk*, by Mrs. INCHBALD. The merits of this Play have been sufficiently investigated in the *Third Number* of our Work, to which we respectfully



fully refer our readers. It met with a very indifferent reception, but a reception fully adequate to its merits.

The last *novelty* on the list, is likewise a Covent Garden bantling; to wit, *The Volcano*, a Pantomime, produced December 23, and the merit of which is conjointly claimed by Messrs. DIBDIN, FARLEY, and BOLOGNA, Jun. We are happily relieved from the necessity of entering into an examination of its character, having noticed it to the full measure of its deserts, in the First Number of our Publication. Its success, we have reason to believe, was not adequate to the expectations of the Managers; indeed we doubt whether, with all its attractions, it indemnified the Proprietors for the expence incurred by its production.

The above, then, constitute the *Dramatic Novelties* brought forward at both Theatres, prior to the commencement of our Publication. The subsequent occurrences, we flatter ourselves, have been sufficiently detailed in the course of our Work to supersede the necessity of any further specification. We shall, therefore, conclude our *Retrospect*, by presenting the reader with the following list and enumeration of the different Plays acted at the two Houses previous to the date of our Publication.

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THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

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☞ *The New Plays, Entertainments, &c. produced during the Season, are distinguished by an Asterisk. (\*)*

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1799.

SEPTEMBER.

- Tuesday*, 17. The Castle Spectre—The Prize.  
 19. Hamlet—The Virgin Unmask'd.  
 21. The Clandestine Marriage—The Lying Valet.  
*Tuesday*, 24. The Wheel of Fortune—The Deserter.  
 26. The Castle Spectre—The Children in the Wood.  
 28. Rule a Wife, and Have a Wife—The Prize.

OCTOBER.

- Tuesday*, 1. As You Like It—High Life Below Stairs.  
 3. The Revenge—\**Embarkation*,  
 5. The Rivals—Embarkation.  
*Monday*, 7. Richard the Third—Embarkation.  
 8. A Bold Stroke for a Wife—Embarkation.  
 10. Hamlet—Embarkation.  
 12. Much Ado about Nothing—No Song, No Supper.  
*Monday*, 14. Rule a Wife, and Have a Wife—Blue Beard.  
 15. As You Like It—Blue Beard.  
 17. The Wonder—Blue Beard.  
 19. The Beggars Opera—Blue Beard.  
*Monday*, 21. The Grecian Daughter—Blue Beard.  
 22. Love for Love—Blue Beard.  
 23. The Castle Spectre—The Deserter.  
 24. A Bold Stroke for a Wife—No Song, No Supper.  
 26. The Beggars Opera—The Apprentice.  
*Monday*, 28. Hamlet—Blue Beard.  
 29. The Belles Stratagem—Blue Beard.  
 30. The Castle Spectre—The Children in the Wood.  
 31. Love makes a Man—The Prize.

NOVEMBER



## NOVEMBER.

1. The Wheel of Fortune—Blue Beard.
2. The Jew—The Deserter.
- Monday,* 4. Hamlet—Blue Beard.
5. Much Ado about Nothing—Blue Beard.
6. The Maid of the Mill—Catherine and Petruchio.
7. The Rivals—The Shipwreck.
8. The Merchant of Venice—High Life below Stairs.
9. A Bold Stroke for a Wife—Blue Beard.
- Monday,* 11. Hamlet—Blue Beard.
12. The Beggars Opera—The First Floor.
13. Rule a Wife, and Have a Wife—My Grandmother.
14. The Tempest—The Humourist.
15. The Castle Spectre—The Children in the Wood.
16. The Secret—\**The Pavillion.*
- Monday,* 18. Richard the Third—The Pavillion.
19. The Secret—My Grandmother.
20. The Belles Stratagem—Blue Beard.
21. As You Like It—The Deserter.
22. Isabella—The Apprentice.
23. Love makes a Man—Blue Beard.
- Monday,* 25. Jane Shore—The Mock Doctor.
26. The Secret—Blue Beard.
27. The Stranger—The Irish Widow.
28. The Tempest—The Mock Doctor.
29. Measure for Measure—The Virgin Unmask'd.
30. The Wheel of Fortune—The Deserter.

## DECEMBER.

- Monday,* 2. The Will—Scotch Ghost—Blue Beard.
3. Hamlet—The Shipwreck.
4. The Castle Spectre—No Song, No Supper.
5. The Stranger—The Humourist.
6. The Will—Blue Beard.
7. The East-Indian—The Prize.
- Monday,* 9. The Gamester—Blue Beard.
10. The East-Indian—The Children in the Wood.

11. Pizarro—The Lying Valet.
12. The East-Indian—The Shipwreck.
13. Pizarro—The Apprentice.
14. The East-Indian—The Deserter.
- Monday,* 16. Pizarro—My Grandmother.
17. The Beggars Opera—The Scotch Ghost—High Life  
Below Stairs.
18. Pizarro—Virgin Unmask'd.
19. The Clandestine Marriage—The Scotch Ghost—The  
Purse
20. Pizarro—The Mock Doctor.
21. Pizarro—The Lying Valet.
- Monday,* 23. Pizarro—The Humourist.
26. The London Merchant—Blue Beard.

✎ *With the Representations of this Evening, the DRAMATIC CENSOR commenced its Literary Career.*

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## THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN.

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✎ *The New Plays, Entertainments, &c. produced during the Season, are distinguished by an Asterisk. (\*)*

1799.

SEPTEMBER.

- Monday,* 16. Laugh, When You Can—Rosina.
18. The Beggars Opera—The Farm-House.
  20. The Suspicious Husband—The Highland Reel.
- Monday,* 23. Richard the Third—The Farmer.
25. The Votary of Wealth—Robin Hood.
  27. The Castle of Andalusia—Catherine and Petruchio.
- Monday,* 30. Macbeth—The Poor Soldier.

OCTOBER.

2. The Road to Ruin—Lock and Key.
  4. Othello.—The Maid of the Mill.
- Monday,* 7. Romeo and Juliet—\**The Naval Pillar.*
9. The Orphan—The Naval Pillar.
  10. Lover's



10. Lovers Vows—The Naval Pillar.  
 11. The Beaux-Stratagem—The Naval Pillar.  
*Monday,* 14. Alexander the Great—The Naval Pillar.  
 16. Every One Has His Fault—The Spoiled Child.  
 17. A Cure for the Heart Ache—The Irish Mimic.  
 18. The Horse and The Widow—The Dramatist—The Irishman in London.  
*Monday,* 21. The Birth Day—The Death of Captain Cook—The Naval Pillar.  
 23. The Birth Day—The Naval Pillar—The Death of Captain Cook.  
 24. Ramah Droog—The Jew and The Doctor.  
 25. The Way to Get Married—Honest Thieves.  
 26. Lovers Vows—The Death of Captain Cook—The Naval Pillar.  
*Monday,* 28. Macbeth—The Death of Captain Cook.  
 29. King Lear—The Naval Pillar.  
 30. Ramah Droog—The Jew and the Doctor.  
 31. \**Management*—The Miser.


## NOVEMBER.

1. Management—The Spoiled Child.  
 2. Management—The Farmer.  
*Monday,* 4. Management—The Naval Pillar.  
 5. Management—The Poor Soldier.  
 6. Management—The Spoiled Child.  
 7. Jane Shore—The Naval Pillar.  
 8. Management—Lovers Quarrels.  
 9. Management—The Ghost—The Mouth of the Nile.  
*Monday,* 11. The Mysteries of the Castle—Cross Purposes—The Mouth of the Nile.  
 12. Management—Robin Hood.  
 13. Management—The Flitch of Bacon.  
 14. The Fair Penitent—\**The Turnpike Gate*.  
 15. Management—The Turnpike Gate.  
 16. Management—The Turnpike Gate.  
*Monday,* 18. Romeo and Juliet—The Turnpike Gate.

- 19. Management—The Turnpike Gate.
- 20. The Birth Day—The Turnpike Gate.
- 21. Management—The Turnpike Gate.
- 22. Management—The Turnpike Gate.
- 23. Management—The Turnpike Gate.
- Monday,* 25. Management—The Turnpike Gate.
- 26. Management—The Turnpike Gate.
- 27. Management—The Turnpike Gate.
- 28. Management—The Turnpike Gate.
- 29. Management—The Turnpike Gate.
- 30. \**The Wise Man of the East*—The Spoiled Child.

## DECEMBER.

- Monday,* 2. The Wise Man of the East—Hartford Bridge.
- 3. The Wise Man of the East—The Turnpike Gate.
- 4. The Wise Man of the East—Cymon.
- 5. The Wise Man of the East—The Turnpike Gate.
- 6. The Wise Man of the East—The Turnpike Gate.
- 7. The Wise Man of the East—The Poor Soldier.
- Monday,* 9. Romeo and Juliet—The Divertisement.
- 10. The Wise Man of the East—Comus.
- 11. Management—The Turnpike Gate.
- 12. The Wise Man of the East—Lock and Key.
- 13. Management—The Turnpike Gate.
- 14. The Wise Man of the East—The Turnpike Gate.
- Monday,* 16. Inkle and Yarico—The Jew and the Doctor.
- 17. Management—The Turnpike Gate.
- 18. The Wise Man of the East—The Jew and the Doctor.
- 19. Lovers Vows—The Turnpike Gate.
- 20. Management—The Poor Soldier.
- 21. *No Performance at this Theatre, in consequence of the rehearsal of the New Pantomime.*
- Monday,* 23. The Earl of Essex—\**The Volcano.*
- 26. Jane Shore—The Volcano.

 *The DRAMATIC CENSOR commenced its career with the performance of this Evening.*

FINE



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FINE ARTS, &c.  
*EXHIBITION OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY,*  
FOR THE YEAR 1800.

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NUMBER VIII.  
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No. 637. *Bust of a Nobleman.*—C. ROSSI, A.

THIS is a bust of one of the most upright Judges (the late LORD CHANCELLOR) that any age or country ever produced. It gives us pleasure to add, that the Artist has done justice to his subject. It is executed with befitting dignity and spirit, and forms a work, which we do not hesitate to class among the finest specimens of modern sculpture.

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No. 659. *Portrait of Mrs. Brun.*—W. PORTER.

THIS picture presents a specimen of great clearness of colouring, but is rather deficient in point of *force*.

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No. 662. *Portrait of a Gentleman.*—J. OPIE, R. A.

THIS is the portrait of a Gentleman who has brought a particular branch of the art, *enamel-painting*, to a degree of perfection unparalleled in the former annals of this country. It is almost superfluous to apprise our readers, that we allude to Mr. BONE, whose portrait, *in enamel*, of her MAJESTY, forms one of the chief ornaments of the Exhibition, and has been purchased, for its extraordinary merit, by his ROYAL HIGHNESS the PRINCE of WALES, whose ready and active patronage of the arts has further displayed itself by his recent appointment of Mr. BONE to be *Painter in Enamel* to his ROYAL HIGHNESS.

Mr. OPIE has painted this portrait with great force and expression. The resemblance is uncommonly striking, the colouring remarkably

remarkably clear, and indeed the head seems to stand out from the canvas.

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No. 671. *The Death of Captain Hood*.—H. SINGLETON.

WE merely notice this *thing* to observe, that subjects of this dignified nature ought not to be treated in so slovenly a manner. The transaction forms a point in history highly honourable to the national character. As such, it ought to be treated with becoming dignity and attention.

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No. 672. *The Ruins of Tintern Abbey*.—B. WEST, R. A.

BY the PRESIDENT of the *Royal Academy*, but in other respects, little entitled to commendation. Independant of the characteristic defects of the Artist, as to colouring, it is not architecturally correct.

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No. 673. *Portrait of Mrs. Pullan*, and No. 677. *Portrait of Mrs. G. Bates*.—J. RUSSELL, R. A.

IN our opinion it would puzzle a thorough-paced casuist to determine, which of these two articles is most entitled to reprobation. They may be paintings, but they certainly have no analogy to nature. The Artist, unlike the poet, who was said to “*scatter even his dung gracefully*,” has disposed of his shade in a manner, which gives a dirty, filthy appearance to the flesh and drapery.

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No. 691. *Portrait of Mr. J. Bannister*.—J. RUSSELL, R. A.  
POSSESSES all the pertness and self-sufficiency of the original.

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No. 696. *Portrait of Mr. Corbould*—H. P. BONE.

As a portrait this work boasts the merit of striking similitude.—As a picture, it is painted with a firm and broad pencil, and the colouring is remarkably clear.

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No. 700. *Portraits of Master and Miss Bradshaw*.—B. BURNELL.

THIS drawing affords another instance of the mismanagement of the *Hanging Committee*. It is placed in a situation, where it is almost

almost impossible to obtain a glimpse of it, especially when the rooms happen to be crowded with company. Those, however, who like us, will take the pains to watch an opportunity of inspecting it, will find it a work of considerable merit. The head of the young lady, in particular, displays much taste, and the whole is finished with elegance.

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## LIBRARY.

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No. 723. *Vase with Flowers*.—J. BARNEY.

THE penciling broad and firm, accompanied with great clearness of colour.

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No. 733. *The Portrait of the Bishop of St. Pol de Leon*.—H. P. DANLOUX.

THIS is a picture of very fair promise: the drawing is good, and the colouring harmonious; but too *sombre*; and the figure is hurt by the great redundancy of back ground. We must further observe, that the profusion of letters scattered on the floor has a pompous and pedantic appearance, and the lustre of the paper leads the eye astray from the principal object.

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No. 743. *Portrait of Mr. C. Plowden*.—W. OWEN.

THE colouring of this picture is remarkably clear; the attitude graceful and easy, and the whole presents a rich effect to the eye.

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No. 744. *Hambletonian, rubbing down*.—G. STUBBS, A.

PICTURES of this description scarcely carry any interest with them, except in the estimation of the Jockey. We are sorry to see them occupy situations, which ought to be consigned to their betters. The horse is much too heavy for a racer, and the pigmy size of the figures adds to its *montrosity*. The whole, indeed, is in a poor style of colour and *chiaro-scuro*; but it would be highly unjust not to commend the great taste and judgment displayed in the framework.

MINIATURES.



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## MINIATURES.

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THESE articles are less numerous this year than in former Exhibitions; but, in point of merit, many of them rank high, and do credit to their respective Artists. Among the *Enamels*, the works of Mr. BONE claim the first distinction. Independant of the beautiful *whole length* of HER MAJESTY, on which we expatiated very amply in the former part of our *Strictures*, this Gentleman has furnished some exquisite small enamels, among which the Portrait of the ARCHBISHOP OF YORK is entitled to particular commendation. Mr. SPICER, likewise, has made considerable improvement in this branch of the art; but his enamels fall short of the excellence of Mr. BONE's productions, and are not sufficiently exempt from that *vitrified, china-like* appearance, which Mr. BONE has so successfully avoided.

Having touched on the subject of *enamels*, it is proper that we should comment on an egregious blunder, in the commission of which the *Council* and the *Hanging Committee* are equally implicated. We allude to No. 808, which is described in the *Catalogue*, as a frame, containing eight pictures in *enamel*, by W. GRIMALDI. Now it may well excite no small surprize, that neither the Members of the *Council*, nor the *Hanging Committee* (all of them ROYAL ACADEMICIANS) should have been able to discover that the pictures in question were *not* enamels, as pretended, but *common miniatures*, and *one* of them, if we mistake not, (the portrait of Mr. BOULTON) a *copy* from an oil picture, and of course not admissible into the Exhibition, all *copies*, except *in enamel*, being prohibited by the standing rules of the Academy. How a mistake of this kind could have occurred, is to us, we candidly confess, a very paradoxical question.

To go individually through the catalogue of *miniatures*, would be at once a very tedious and a very useless task. We shall, therefore, content ourselves with generally observing, that the following Artists have exerted themselves in this line with great ability and

and success, viz. COLLINS, ARTAUD, PAILLOU, COSSE, SHELLEY, HAZLITT, FERRIERE, WOOD, MRS. DAYES, and Miss SINGLETON.

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## MODEL ACADEMY.

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IN the *Model Academy* we are happy to observe a visible improvement; the present Exhibition far surpassing that of the preceding year, both in the number and the merit of the several works in this department. Some of them, indeed, are of a superior character, from which we select the following, as possessing the most indubitable claim to our notice, viz.

No. 977. *Bust of Ariadne*.—C. HORWELL.

THIS colossal head is executed in a masterly style, and reflects great honour on the talents of the Artist. The expression of the mouth is inconceivably sweet and pleasing.

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No. 997. *A Model Part of a Monument, executed in Marble, and erected in Wilton Church, Wilts.*—E. ROSSI, A.

THIS is in every sense an admirable groupe: the sitting figure is remarkably beautiful, and the drapery well cast.

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No. 1031. *Venus anointing her Hair*.—J. NOLLEKENS, R. A.

SUCH is the general character and merit of this exquisite work of Art, that the most fastidious critic cannot hesitate to pronounce it a master-piece. It is therefore, with the greatest diffidence, that we venture to point out the slightest defect (or what at least to us appears to be a defect) in this charming sculpture. But candour, and the most rigid impartiality, are the essential qualifications which a critic ought to possess; and true genius never takes umbrage at cool and dispassionate remonstrance. We shall therefore freely avow that the head is, in our opinion, rather too large to accord with just symmetry and proportion, and that the face has not that fascinating effect which ought to characterise the Goddess of Love and Beauty. But in every other respect, it approximates so

closely to perfection, as to form a point of national taste. It would be a vain attempt to expatiate on individual beauties in a work, which altogether forms one mass of excellence, and ranks the name of the Sculptor high on the roll of professional celebrity.

As an Artist, Mr. NOLLEKENS has exhibited himself to the fairest advantage this year. His monumental groupe, No. 1082, is a work of exquisite merit, and proves the extent of his abilities.

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No. 1054. *An afflicted Mother comforted by an Angel: a Monument at Lewisham Church, Kent.*—J. FLAXMAN, R. A.

THIS work affords ample scope for commendation. The attitude of the mother is finally imagined, and the whole full of character and expression.

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No. 1083. *Fighting Bulls.*—G. GARRARD.

Mr. GARRARD's merit, as a correct and spirited sculptor of animals, is universally admitted. The present model is handled with extraordinary freedom and firmness.

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WITH respect to the *Architectural Drawings*, the most conspicuous for taste and elegance are unquestionably the designs for a New House of Lords, by J. SOANE, *Associate*, which evince talents of the most distinguished order, as far as we can judge from a view in perspective, unaccompanied with either plan or section. The generality of the rest of the articles in this line constitute an assemblage of *common-place*, such as is usually to be met with on these annual occasions. Indeed, to sum up the general account, we must repeat our former statement, that the Exhibition of the present year, though it may surpass, in *point of number*, is greatly inferior, in *point of merit*, to what we have been accustomed to witness on similar occasions.

STRICTURES.



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## STRICTURES ON THE ROYAL ACADEMY,

Involving an Investigation in how far the Institution has been conducive, or detrimental, to the Progress of the Arts.

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IN the Nineteenth Number of this Work, we pledged ourselves to the Public to canvas the question relative to the practical utility of the ROYAL ACADEMY, as at present constituted, as at present operative. This promise we now proceed to fulfil, and shall, as we then engaged to do, enter on the discussion boldly, and with impartial freedom.

We advanced in plain and explicit terms a charge of heavy import against the Academy, purporting that the establishment had been perverted *in toto*, from its original design, and that its funds had been, and still continued to be, grossly misapplied. This assertion we made on the presumption, on the broad principle, that the improvement and perfection of the Fine Arts constituted the motives, real and ostensible, which led to the Institution; and this principle we shall lay down as the clue of our researches. By this criterion, we mean to examine the practice of the Academy, and from facts, from the evidence of experience, to judge in how far the Members of the Academy square their line of conduct to their duty, and keep in view the original design of the establishment.

It will hardly be contended that the SOVEREIGN sanctioned the Establishment of the ROYAL ACADEMY,

DEMY, and that the Nation, at the *Public expence*, provided the needful local accommodations, without expecting much practical good and benefit from the measure. The spacious apartments which they occupy in Somerset House were not originally *given* them to serve as the means of *levying a tax* upon that Public, through whose liberality they exist. They *were* not, they *are* not, a *Corporate Body*; nay more, (however grating the assertion may sound in their ears) they are, in plain fact, a clan of *runnagates*; a body of *factious seceders* from a *Body Corporate* now existing; to wit, the *Society of Artists*. From that Society, a Society infinitely more useful and respectable than themselves, they seceded, because the Rules, the Government, the Laws and Administration of the Society, denied them the means of converting an Establishment into a *cabal*! They seceded, because in that Society, trusts, offices, emoluments, &c. are free and open to *all*; because *every Member*, in rotation, succeeds to employments; whereas the ROYAL ACADEMICIANS are *self-elected Dictators perpetual*, to the *exclusion* of the great body of Artists, and are removable only by a vote of expulsion, which is only to be dreaded by a man of bold and liberal sentiment: by a man that dares, after the example of the *Ex-Professor of Painting*, Mr. BARRY, to speak the truth; dares to remind them of their duty; dares to expose their faults, their intrigues, their mal-practices, their corrupt system of speculation, and self-aggrandizement.

Such



Such a man is certainly ill-qualified to hold a seat in an Assembly, the Members of which act systematically and conjointly upon the very principles which he so pointedly, so justly reprobates, and holds up to public detestation.

That we may not, however, be accused of dealing merely in declamation and invective, we shall proceed to *specific points*, and endeavour to substantiate the charges we advanced against the Academy, by passing from *general* to *individual* topics.

It was doubtless understood by the Nation, and the great body of the Artists themselves, when the Institution of the ROYAL ACADEMY first took place, that the R. A. Members were but so many *Agents* to the Profession at large; so many *Trustees* for the faithful accomplishment of the object (to wit, the improvement of the Arts) which the Founders had in view by planning the measure, and which likewise constituted the object of the Public; who, at their own expence, endowed them with the necessary means of carrying the measure into execution. The Public, doubtless, expected that active steps would be taken to raise that profession to the highest attainable point of perfection, as an object of national glory; and that as an object of national concernment, the proceedings of the Academy should be amenable to public opinion; that some public statement should be made on this head, either annually, or at such other periods, as expediency might



might direct. The justice of this requisition, to us, appears so palpable and obvious, that we cannot conceive any ground of rational objection on which it can possibly be resisted.

Again; in erecting the Academy into a *critical board*, into a *professional umpireship*, it was certainly expected, that any appeal to their judgment on the subject of *public works*, should be considered in the light of a *trust*, calling upon them to decide between *rival merit*; not as the means of fraudulently *engrossing a job to themselves*! It certainly is the intention of the parties, whether public or private, who on such occasions refer to their award, that the *field of competition should be thrown open to all*; that every *Artist* should have an opportunity of contending for the prize; and that the Academy should only act in the capacity, as before stated, of *umpires*, and faithfully award the palm to that competitor who should evince himself most deserving of it! What a flagrant breach of trust, then, has the Academy not rendered itself guilty of, by \* *purloining commissions*,

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\* See some damning facts on this subject in Mr. BARRY'S *Letter to the Dilettanti Society*, which we have a right to consider as proved and authentic, as his assertions remain to this day uncontradicted, though he expressly mentions the names of the parties, and presents us with copies of the original documents. From this statement, it appears, (page 39, of the *Second Edition*) that *Commissions* were sent to the Academy from the House of Assembly, in Jamaica, and from Fort St. George, in the East Indies, for statues of Lord RODNEY and Marquis CORNWALLIS—in  
pursuance

sions, and passing decrees of their own, enacting that *none but themselves should be allowed to start for the prize; that none, but a Royal Academician, should be allowed to enter the lists*:—thus, as it were, by a grand general *coup de main*, smuggling to themselves the opportunities due to the profession at large.

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pursuance of which, the Academy, instead of calling upon the Profession at large to furnish models, in order, that by exciting the spirit of competition, they might bring into action the general genius of the country, immediately *smuggled the job to themselves*, and decreed that *none but themselves* should be permitted to contend for the mastery. The consequence was, that in the first instance, only *two* persons (R. A.'s of course) entered the lists; in the latter case only *one*, and this at a time when one of the first Artists in the country, but unfortunately not an R. A. the late justly lamented Mr. PROCTOR, was absolutely *dying for want*, and consuming from a broken heart, galled by *Academical cabal* and disappointment!

Indeed, instead of thus shamefully and fraudulently engrossing such commissions to themselves, decency should rather have recommended to them to imitate the example of many foreign Societies in this respect, which expressly enact, among their standing laws, that no *Member* shall be allowed to contend for any prize, the award of which rests with the *Society*; justly apprehensive, that without this salutary regulation, their integrity and impartiality might incur suspicion. But the Royal Academy has not even common decency—so totally devoid is it of modesty and virtuous shame, that it carries on its illicit proceedings with unblushing front in the public eye of day. It does not even use the precaution of a veil, but boldly discovers the *cloven-foot*, and proclaims to the world at large, that meanness, avarice, and rapacity, are its ruling principles of action.

Another



Another gross and flagrant abuse, and more immediately connected with the establishment itself, respects the misapplication of the Society's funds, a subject on which Mr. BARRY, in his excellent Treatise, has commented with great and merited severity. Instead of applying the great revenues they are, through the generosity of the public, in receipt of, to *national* purposes, to the advancement of the Arts, to the formation of a national gallery, which might serve as a practical school for acquiring the genuine principles of taste and science, they have *seized* upon the property, which, strictly speaking, they only *hold in trust*, and by an act of their own, these *self-elected perpetual dictators* have presumed to *annuitize* themselves.

As it is through the munificence of the public in the *first* instance, and through the *continued* generosity of that public, from year to year, that the Royal Academy are enabled to acquire and accumulate their funds, it appears to us but just and reasonable that they should be accountable to the public for the use they make of their revenue. This, the public, in our opinion, has a right to demand. We do not mean to insist, that the annual statement, which *ought* to be published of the Academy's accounts, should contain, in every instance, a detailed specification of the *manner* in which part of their surplus-receipts might be employed, in relieving the necessities of decayed or indigent artists. Delicacy in this case would naturally suggest the propriety of suppressing



suppressing the *names* of individuals. But the *gross sum*, thus expended in benevolent uses ought, unquestionably, to be stated. And the public, with that spirit of generosity which forms the peculiar characteristic of Englishmen, would contribute with additional cheerfulness and liberality to the augmentation of the funds of the Academy, when they beheld them thus judiciously, thus benevolently and and humanely applied.

Indeed there is another strong imperious reason, in which the honour of the Academy itself is involved, why the Academicians should promulgate the actual state of their finances; to wit, for the purpose of repelling the charge brought against them by Mr. BARRY, on the plea of their culpable indifference to the advancement of the Arts, evinced by their neglect in not supplying the institution with a proper collection of pictures, for the improvement of the students, and, generally speaking, for the formation of the national taste. If it be *not*, as Mr BARRY contends, the want of the *will*, but of the *means*, which has hitherto delayed the accomplishment of this desirable object, let them come ingenuously forward with a statement of their accounts, and prove their incapacity. This would at once redeem their own character, and transfer the obloquy under which they now labour from themselves to their accuser.

Ere we dismiss this subject, we must, in addition to these instances of *wilful* and *culpable* mismanage-

ment, take the liberty to animadvert on what to us appears an *injudicious* misapplication of the funds of the Academy. The members, if questioned relative to the want of a *national gallery*, would probably plead in excuse the incompetency of their finances to such a measure. Here then we wish to suggest a very practicable opportunity of retrenchment in another quarter. The sums expended in *continental trips*, under the idea of perfecting the young student, may now be very well suffered to accumulate for purposes of more pressing necessity; the effects of the revolution having nearly done away the shadow of a plea for a practice, the real advantage and utility of which are seldom to be seen in the works of these *travelled* and *Italianized* artists. The *Gold-Medal*, likewise, might be wholly dispensed with, as not constituting an object of adequate encouragement to any grand undertaking, and very little good resulting from its distribution, on occasions of inferior moment and importance.

In their stead, we would recommend to propose handsome premiums, commensurate to the labour and difficulty of the enterprize, for grand historical compositions; and still more to excite a spirit of emulation, the prize might, in cases of *extraordinary rival desert*, extend, with proper modification, to the second and third on the list of merit. Again; to give the greater weight and popularity to the scheme, let the subjects be chosen from the history of our own country, which would increase their *na-*  
*tional*



*tional* value. The annals of Great Britain, in this view, furnish an exhaustless theme. Our naval victories would employ the aggregate genius of the country, and might be celebrated either historically or allegorically. The death of the gallant Captain Hood, in the arms of victory, would form no unworthy counterpart to that of EPAMINONDAS; and, the adoption of such a scheme, on the part of the Academy, would wrest the fame of great and meritorious characters from the hands of *botchers* and venal *catch-penny* publishers; who would instantly desist from their mercenary speculations, when they found the matter taken up on a broad, liberal scale, and proposed as a prize-theme by the Royal Academy.

Again; let it be considered, that the expence attendant on the distribution of premiums now recommended, would be more than defrayed by directing the *prize picture* to be engraved, under the superintendance of the Academy, in the first style of *stroke-engraving*, and sold to the public with the *Academic signature*, which would guarantee the value of the work, and secure the purchaser from imposition. In starting this proposal, we are well aware, that the pride of some gentlemen may be apt to take alarm, at the idea of converting the Academy into what they may be pleased to style a *print-shop*. But to obviate this shallow objection, it need only to be observed, that the Members of the ROYAL SOCIETY do not think it derogatory to *their* dignity,



nity to sell their *transactions*; and the respectable SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIANS vend, in like manner, their *Archæologia*. After their example, the Royal Academy might confine their sale to *subscribers*, and the whole plan might be conducted with very little trouble, as the exact number of prints necessary to be worked off would be known before-hand, and the servants of the Academy could easily manage the delivery of the copies. The adoption of this scheme would not in the least interfere with the medals given for *architecture, sculpture, &c.* And in proportion as the plan should prove successful, it might admit of enlargement; and premiums similar to those now proposed for the encouragement of the *higher walks of the art*, might be extended to *landscape-painting*, either as *views* or *composition*, with the same opportunity of *re-indemnification*, by *engravings*, as in the former instance. Some restricting clause would of course be necessary to prevent the successful candidate from carrying all future prizes, by enacting, that the victor should not be permitted to enter the lists in the same branch and line, till after the intervention of a certain limited period.

In a dissertation of this nature, written *bona fide*, on the spur of occasion, from the impulse of the moment, and literally *currente calamo*, niceness and methodical arrangement are not to be expected. All that our readers have a right to demand is, that we should keep in view the specific object of enquiry, and advance no assertion on slight foundation.

tion. We cannot therefore finally dismiss the question relative to the Finances of the Academy, without saying a few words on the *growing* exactions levied by the Academy at their annual Exhibition. Originally the Public were allowed (what, but for secondary reasons, which we shall explain anon, they have still a right to demand) *free* admittance to the Rooms. In the year 1780 an *apology* appeared at the head of the Catalogue, for *taking money* as the price of admission. The plea assigned for this conduct; to wit, that “without some regulation of this nature, the Rooms would be filled with improper company,” was readily admitted by a generous Public; at the same time opinion was unanimous on this point, that but for this reason, the Academy had no right to *levy a tax* upon the Public for frequenting Rooms, which were, in fact, *their own*. The Public, therefore, cheerfully acquiesced in a demand, which they did not foresee would be converted, as it is, into a regular system of *extortion*. There is an old but a very sapient adage—“*Give some people an inch, they’ll take an ell.*”—Precisely in this manner did the Royal Academy act. Finding that the Public were easily prevailed upon to compromise their *rights*, and to pay for *seeing their own*, their insatiable avarice devised another means of augmenting their store. In addition to the demand of *one shilling* made upon the Public for the privilege of *visiting their own rooms*, and for which extortion the Academy thought it necessary, in 1730, to  
make



make a formal apology, a fresh tax was imposed in the article of *Catalogues*, for which the public were now charged at the rate of *Sixpence*, although this article constitutes the sole *item* of expence incurred by the Academy, and for which the Academy is abundantly repaid by the immense profits they reap, not from their own industry, but from the labours of those who, in the general, have no part or lot in the *plunder*; to wit, the Exhibiting Artists. At what point the avarice and profligacy of the Academicians will stop, it is not for human foresight to determine.

But we begin to tire with the fatigue of raking this *Augean* stable, this *sink* of foulness and delinquency. Let us hasten therefore to the goal of our disquisitions, by taking a slight review of the question in *abstract*, how far the Royal Academy, to judge *by experience*, is likely to conduce to the improvement of the Arts.

That an Institution of this nature, duly controlled, and secured against the intrigues of a *cabal*, might be rendered useful, we readily admit. Certainly, essential benefit *might* accrue from the *congregating* of men of liberal and expanded minds, to confer on subjects of practical utility, and to communicate the result of their individual or collective experience. But that any possible national good can be reaped from an Institution constituted and regulated on the plan of the Royal Academy, as at present composed, this is a position which we boldly and peremptorily



remptorily deny. And we have the authority of precedent, the evidence of facts, in support of our testimony. 'Tis impossible, that any establishment whatever can conduce to the improvement of the Arts, unless proper measures of precaution be adopted to guard against the machinations of self-interest; unless proper steps be taken to prevent the Institution from being perverted to the mercenary views of a sordid unprincipled cabal. While the Members are *self-elective*, and *for life*, 'tis impossible to guard against mal-practice and abuse.

In proof of this assertion, let us take a glance at the History of similar Institutions in foreign countries. The French National Academy, founded under LOUIS XIV. boasted, among other illustrious Members, the names of LE BRUN, LE SUEUR, BOURDON, &c. &c. It commenced under the fairest, the most promising auspices. But what was the result? Did it produce men of equal, much less greater celebrity than the original founders? The case was directly the reverse! It generated its PIERRES, its LE MOINES, its BOUCHERS, and a long string of *et cetera's*, scarcely entitled to the name of Artists, till it gradually sunk into insignificance. A similar fate attached itself to the Roman School, which experienced a regular decline from the æra of MICHAEL ANGELO and RAFAELLE. The Bolognian School furnishes another evidence of the justice of our remark, losing  
all

all claim to pre-eminence with the demise of the CARACCHES.

To come, however, nearer home, let us apply the question immediately to our own institution, to the Royal Academy of Great Britain, which Mr. BARRY describes by the more humiliating, but just appellation of a *mere drawing-school*. Has the nation derived any practical benefit from its establishment, in any of the great, leading, higher walks of the Art? Certainly not. It has operated, indeed, like a fertile hot-bed (we might say *dung-hill*) to produce a vile collection of *fungi*, of excrescencies, of half-formed artists, whose whole merit consists in *face-making*. These wretched practitioners have over-run the country like weeds; they have propagated with the fecundity of vermin; and like starved locusts are now ready to devour each other. Men are taught to believe, that the Academy possesses the power of transforming *dullards* into *artists*, and that at the trifling expence of a little previous instruction at a common drawing-school, youth may at once be initiated into a honourable profession, and become gentlemen. This delusion has misled but too many parents, who have thence been induced to devote their children to an occupation, for which they have no real native genius, little conceiving what a store of future sorrow and disappointment they were heaping up for their offspring.

If any actual good had resulted from the institution, we might naturally expect to find it in the  
higher



higher walks of the Art. But how stands the case with respect to Historical painting? Have we, with one or two exceptions, any Artists of celebrity in that line, that did not belong to the Academy at the time of its origin? Has the Royal Academy, by its own virtue, its own operation, produced any auxiliaries of note in this department? On the other hand, what an infinite host of *face-painters* has it not generated? Have we not *portrait-mongers* both in oil and miniature in every street? Is not the market absolutely overstocked with these triflers?

Great stress has been laid on the practical advantages derived from the *Model Academy*. The utility of this part of the institution, we mean not to call in question; but the credit, the honour, does not attach to the Royal Academy. The ancient incorporated Society of Artists, in St. Martin's Lane, enjoyed the same advantage at the expence of a very trifling subscription. At this place it was, that HOGARTH predicted the fatal consequences of converting a honourable profession into a mercenary trade. Here it was that he made the following observation, which experience has but too faithfully verified:—"Print-shops, at the rate we are now going on," he exclaimed, "will become as common as public-houses; and I shall not be surprized if some of us live to see the day, when a knack at drawing will form one of the essential requisites in the qualification of a gentleman's servant; and when a servant out of place, will find it necessary to learn to wield



the brush, as he now learns to play on the fiddle or the French horn !"—What then was *prophecy*, is now *historical fact*.

Nor indeed can we wonder that this should be the case, whilst the Academy, instead of stimulating *to high enterprize*, holds out no encouragement but in the very lowest branch of the Art. Mere imitation, which is all that a modern portrait-painter requires, comes within the compass of any man's abilities, that does not rank as a positive idiot. Hence it is, that the town, and indeed the whole kingdom, swarms with *face-painters*, whilst the indications of genius, taste, and science, become daily more rare and hopeless. Such are the blessed effects resulting from the system and practice of our glorious Royal Academy.

We might easily enlarge upon this topic, which naturally suggests a variety of collateral reflections; but the length to which we have already extended our *Strictures*, urges us to bring them to a close. We shall therefore dismiss the subject for the present, and take leave of our readers, with briefly observing, that if we have occasionally been harsh and severe, it is not from a natural disposition to censure, but from the impulse of honest indignation at a system of corruption and abuse. We wish to see a better plan of conduct adapted, a plan founded on the broadest principles of liberality and justice, and only feel warm in the interest of our country; are only zealous for the improvement of Science and Art,  
only

only ardently desirous to promote, *pro parte virili*, the advancement of the National Honour.

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✎ In consequence of an accident, which occurred in the *printing* of this Work at the very moment that it was going to Press, the *Title-page, Index, &c.* are unavoidably delayed till our next Number; when they will be given gratis, as an *additional quantity* to the regular number of our pages. We mean, likewise to present our Readers, at the particular request of several of our Correspondents, with a translation of the *Latin* and *Greek* Mottos, which have appeared in the course of the Two First Volumes of this Work; and flatter ourselves this will prove an acceptable offering to our kind Friends and Patrons.

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✎ As this Number completes, for the present, our *Weekly* series, we beg leave again to appprize our Readers and Patrons, that its re-appearance, as a *Monthly* Publication, will commence on the First of August. We have already, in our former Number, sufficiently detailed the various new Regulations and Improvements we mean to adopt; to that Number, therefore, we respectfully beg leave to refer the Reader.

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